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## Correspondence.

## MR. AVERY AND THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM.

Editor of The Art Amateur:

DEAR SIR: I know perfectly well that an editor cannot supervise and control all of the matter which may appear in his journal, and I never complain of any matter of opinion which may be expressed. But the following statement made among the items on page 3 of The Art Amateur does me injustice: "If Mr. Avery, who is one of the trustees, had shown as much solicitude for the welfare of the city as he has shown for his personal interest in disposing of his collection of porcelain to the museum," etc., etc. Please allow me to state the facts. I never heard, either as an individual or as a trustee, that the Tanagra statuettes had been offered to the museum until after they were secured by Mr. Appleton, of Boston.

I never offered my collection of porcelain for sale to the museum. I removed the collection on the closing of that institution to the Broadway gallery, when I announced in public advertisement that the collection was for sale. The officers of the museum immediately asked for the "refusal" of it until they could make an effort to secure it. The delay consequent upon this effort being made and prolonged has been to my disadvantage, as an institution in another State would have taken it weeks ago had I been free of my obligations to the Metropolitan Museum.

I do not write to ask you to correct the mistake so much as I do to let you know that I am clear of the charges made, believing you have no desire to do injustice to

Most truly yours,

NEW YORK, May 14, 1879.

SAM. P. AVERY.

[Mr. Avery is right in believing that we have no desire to do him injustice; but he is wrong in supposing that "an editor cannot supervise and control all of the matter which may appear in his journal." He can—and he should do so. For our own part, we certainly consider ourselves responsible for the paragraph in question. If we were mistaken in supposing that Mr. Avery is anxious to sell his collection to the Metropolitan Museum, we have only shared the current opinion on the matter, and we are sure that he will thank us for giving him the opportunity to correct it. Mr. Avery thinks that he should be absolved from blame in regard to the failure of the museum to secure the Tanagra statuettes because "either as an individual or as a trustee" he did not know that they had been offered to the museum until they had been sold to some one else. Does it not occur to Mr. Avery that as one of the trustees of the museum it was his duty to know? Who should know about the affairs of the institution if not those entrusted by the public to attend to them?—EDITOR OF THE ART AMATEUR.]

## THE TANAGRA FIGURINES.

Editor of The Art Amateur:

SIR: Will you be kind enough to inform me what are the Tanagra Figurines, which are referred to two or three times in the recent number of The Art Amateur?

MRS. S. A., Detroit, Mich.

The Tanagra Figurines, whose acquisition by Mr. T. G. Appleton, of Boston, was mentioned in our June number, are little statuettes in terra-cotta found in tombs at Tanagra, a town of ancient Boeotia, where they had been buried since 400 years B.C. They are charming specimens of the realistic Greek art of that period. They are from 8 to 15 inches in height, painted and gilded, and well illustrate the every-day life of the Boeotians at the time of Phidias. Their chief interest to us is that they show that the artists of their period, while glorious in the classic models of their deities, had enough original feeling for art to portray with rare skill the persons they elbowed in the street and market-place in every-day life. Until the discoveries in the tombs of Tanagra we were really without examples of the realistic in Greek art.

The modern history of some of the Tanagra Figurines—an illustration of some of them is given herewith—is as follows: They were brought to this country by M. G. L. Feuardent, and advertised for sale. A New York gentleman thought of raising the money to buy them and to offer the collection to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. General di Cesnola undertook to consult with the Board of Trustees as to the importance of possessing them; but from some cause or another the museum was not properly informed of the proposal, and the matter was allowed to drag until Mr. Appleton came along, at once recognized the importance of the figurines, bought them, and presented them to the Fine Arts Museum of Boston. The price paid for the whole collection of twenty-three figures was \$1500.

## PAINTING ON VELVET.

Editor of The Art Amateur:

SIR: Can you tell me what kind of colors to use for painting on velvet?

MYRA.

ANSWER.—You may use any of the ordinary non-corrosive pigments or liquid colors, thickened with a little gum. Preference should be given to those that have the greatest brilliancy and which dry without spreading.

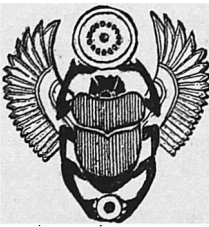
## THE SCARABÆUS.

Editor of The Art Amateur:

SIR: In "Curio" 's article on Dr. Hammond's bric-a-brac he speaks of the "scarabæus." What is it?

MADISON SQUARE.

ANSWER.—The design of the "scarabæus" is shown in the margin. It originated in Egypt, but soon became used as a sacred ornament among the Greeks. It was cut from a hard stone or moulded in clay in the shape of a "beetle." The Egyptians attached to it, as a symbol, an immense importance; for they intended to symbolize by it the great law of transformation or negation of death. Scarabæi are found in great number in Egypt accompanying the mummies, either worn as ornaments or simply as objects deposited in the sarcophagus and bearing prayers for the dead. In Greece, especially in Magna-Græcia, they are generally adorned by exquisite engravings representing fabulous or rural scenes, depicted with great art.



## BLACK AND GOLD DECORATION.

Editor of The Art Amateur:

SIR: From its tendency to warp and its general lack of cohesion, the use of the ordinary soft pine as a decorative wood is but little in favor. Its rich golden color is therefore of little value for art purposes, since it has neither the necessary toughness nor strength. Hence it is but sparingly employed by the worker in wood, and only for the cheapest class of furniture. There are, however, a number of ways in which it may serve a good purpose.

The rich contrast of black and gold may well be imitated by the use of soft pine. The top of the table is of pine; the legs are of some less fragile wood, either oiled or painted black with gold striping. Some suitable design must first be transferred in light pencil strokes to the smoothly finished surface, or with less trouble spatter-work may be employed. The design, of course, will be a matter of variable taste. The drawing having been completed, the pencil-marks must next be carefully followed with a camel-hair brush, using either the best black varnish or, better still, India ink. When this rather tedious operation has been concluded, the unpainted parts of the board may be filled up. The pencil-marks are now defined in India ink. The top must be set away until thoroughly dry, when a coat of the best white varnish can be applied. The varnish, after drying, ought to be carefully removed with sand-paper two or three times to deepen the golden tint and bring it into stronger relief. The greatest care must be observed to prevent marring the unpainted portion of the wood by the abrasure of the sand-paper. A gold-leaf band will look best around the edge, since the variable character of the grain will preclude the use of the brush.

On a dado, or with fret-work, picture frames, glove and handkerchief boxes, and many other like articles, the same treatment is possible. Indeed, I know of one gentleman of high artistic culture who has a board exquisitely painted in this manner, which stands on a light wood easel in his parlor. This work when aged a little bears a close resemblance to the best lacquer work.

WARREN WALTERS, Lewiston, Pa.

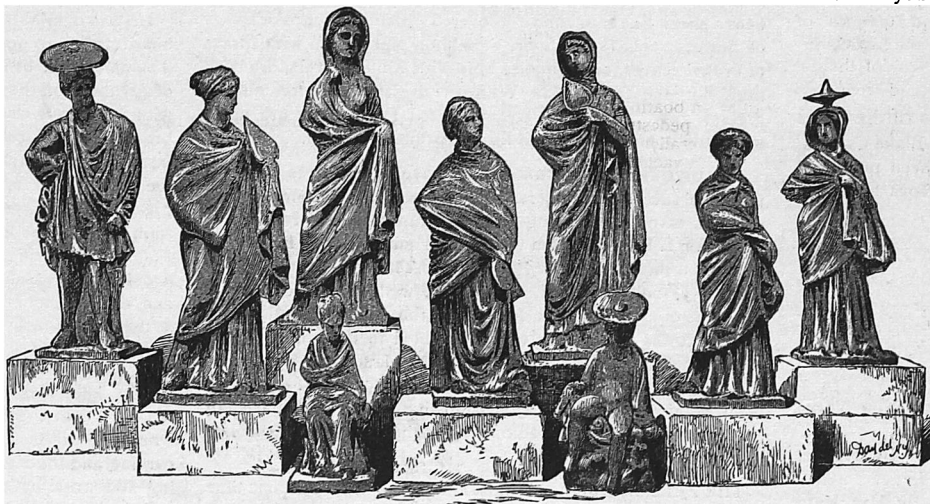
## ORANGE-STAINED OAK.

Editor of The Art Amateur:

SIR: There is an oaken bureau of a peculiarly warm and delicate orange tint on exhibition on Broadway. Can you tell me how the effect of light and color is obtained? I could get no information in the store except that the process was a German one.

CABINET-MAKER.

ANSWER.—Our correspondent should be more explicit, and say (for our information) at what store in Broadway he saw the article of furniture he speaks of. However, he probably refers to a process which was applied very successfully to the coloring of some articles of oak furniture which won a prize at the Vienna Exhibition. It is produced as follows: Melt, under constant stirring before a fire, 80 grains of tallow and 20 grains of wax in half an ounce of turpentine. The wood is rubbed with the mixture and shows a faint lustre. An hour afterward a thin polish is brushed over it. The entire process must be performed in a warm room.



FIGURINES FROM TANAGRA, PRESENTED TO THE BOSTON MUSEUM BY MR. APPLETON.

## WALL-PAPER.

Editor of The Art Amateur:

SIR: Do you think that wall-paper of which yellow is the prevailing color appropriate to dark furniture for a sitting-room?

T. S. P., Peoria, Ill.

ANSWER.—There is no objection to it, unless your dark furniture is gilded. In that case light blue might be a better color.

## TIGHT DRAWERS.

Editor of The Art Amateur:

SIR: The drawers in a cabinet in my dressing-room often swell and open with difficulty. Is there any remedy?

MRS. S. P.

ANSWER.—The cabinet probably stands in a damp place. Rub the parts which touch with powdered talc.

## "THE OLD WILLOW PATTERN."

Editor of The Art Amateur:

SIR: Can you tell me something about "the old willow pattern" as applied to blue china, and the origin of the name?

J. B., North Adams, Mass.

ANSWER.—The name is derived from the figure of a tree in the centre of the old-fashioned blue plates which were much in use some twenty years ago. The tree is supposed to represent a willow in the spring, which unfolds its blossoms before its leaves appear. The picture, which is very odd, tells a Chinese love story, it being the history of the faithful Chang and the beautiful Koong-see. It shows three Chinese crossing a bridge; there are also several houses, and a boat sailing on the stream.

## FRAMES FOR ENGRAVINGS.

Editor of The Art Amateur:

SIR: I should like to know what is the proper color for the frame of a copper-plate engraving? I have had a large handsome engraving given to me, and I fear I may spoil the effect of two oil paintings which hang in the room where I wish to place it if I do not get the right kind of frame.

MAUDE, Elizabeth, N. J.

ANSWER.—In the first place, you should know that engravings and oil paintings should not be placed in juxtaposition. A gilt or black frame would be suitable for the engraving, or gray, if the outer portions of the picture are sufficiently distinct from the frame.

## TO CLEAN JAPANESE LACKER.

Editor of The Art Amateur:

SIR: Can you tell me how my parlor-maid may clean Japanese lacker ware without rubbing off the gilding and damaging the polish?

R. S., Fifth Avenue, N. Y.

ANSWER.—Let her stir some flour in olive oil and with a woolen cloth rub the mixture over the lacker.

## BOOKWORMS.

Editor of The Art Amateur:

SIR: What is the best way to get rid of bookworms or to prevent their appearance?

BIBLIOPOLIST.

ANSWER.—Place musk with a little oil of neroli in an open vessel in the book-case.

## THE DECORATIVE ART SOCIETY.

Editor of The Art Amateur:

SIR: I would like to know something more of the Decorative Art Society—how much is paid for work, etc.

MRS. H. E. E., Hudson, O.

ANSWER.—You should address the Secretary of the Society.

## MAJOLICA.

Editor of The Art Amateur:

SIR: Will you tell me the meaning of the term "Majolica" as applied to faience, and the characteristics of the ware of that name?

S. S., Albany, N. Y.

The name is derived from the island of Majorca, where the Saracens established manufactories of the ware. Afterwards the ware was imported into Italy, where it borrowed the classic forms and myths of ancient Greece and Rome. Hence it is at once domestic and refined in character, oriental and classic; with the harmony of color of Chinese faience, the grace of ornamentation of the Persian, and the Grecian classic simplicity and symmetry of form. It was famous for its lustre, but modern lustres are inferior in beauty to the old methods, especially the secret one which produced the golden lustre, a yellow color overlaid with mother-of-pearl.